



# Sam Brownback

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### **BROWNBACK ADDRESSES NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE, STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF A FATHER'S ROLE**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback on Saturday addressed the National Fatherhood Initiative convention, stressing the vital role fathers play in a child's upbringing. Excerpts of his speech follow.

"We gather to honor what is honorable – the sacrifice, commitment, and consuming labor of love that is fatherhood," Brownback said.

"This month, we will celebrate Father's Day. While this is a wonderful time for many of us to thank our fathers for the love, protection, care, and concern they lavished upon us, there are millions of children in our country who are not so fortunate, for they have no father in their life.

"It is tragic, but true: America is increasingly becoming a fatherless society. Today, more than a third of all American children live without their biological father. By the time they reach 18, more than half of all children will have lived apart from their dads. Of those fatherless children, half have never been in their father's home.

"This is nothing short of a national catastrophe. Some sociologists have called the increasing fatherlessness in America 'the most harmful demographic trend of this generation'; 'the leading cause of declining child well-being', and 'the engine driving our most urgent social problems.' I call it a desperate problem, which, unless it is remedied, will permanently scar our children.

"Fathers are not dispensable. They cannot be replaced with a check. Children need the time, attention, unconditional love, and training of both father and mother. This is certainly not to discount the valiant efforts of many heroic single mothers across this land. There are so many who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to love, care for, and raise their children well – while simultaneously working full-time, often at more than one job, and running the household. But they shouldn't have to do it all alone. Raising children is a job big enough for two.

"If you ask children what they want, their answer is clear and unequivocal. They want their mom and dad to be around – to give them love, time, and attention. To share both quality time, and large quantities of time. The quality of time spent together grows with the quantity.

"To get a good idea of the impact a father has, consider what happens when fathers are absent: Children who grow up without their dad are five times more likely to live in poverty, twice as likely to commit crime, twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to take drugs, and at increased risk of suicide, weapons violations, welfare dependency, and becoming pregnant as an unwed teen.

"It is no exaggeration to say that if we are able to strengthen the institution of fatherhood – which, I believe, requires that we affirm and strengthen the institution of marriage – we will have come a long way towards alleviating and solving our most pressing and pathological social and cultural problems," Brownback said.